The Evidence

Evidence from systematic reviews and randomised controlled trials (RCT’s) confirms the effectiveness of acupuncture in the treatment of neck pain. A randomised placebo-controlled trial that assessed the efficacy of traditional acupuncture for chronic neck pain in 190 patients concluded that acupuncture can relieve pain intensity and improve the quality of daily life with a relative long-term clinical effect in patients with chronic neck pain (Liang et al. 2011).

Physiotherapy aims to promote long-term improvements, and acupuncture may result in pain relief and increased range of movement (ROM). This may allow a patient who would otherwise not be able to fully partake in treatment to engage fully since their pain is less likely to limit them, increasing the likelihood of improved results.

One systematic review of 14 RCT’s confirmed the short-term effectiveness and efficacy of acupuncture in the treatment of neck pain (Fu et al. 2009).

One treatment session of acupuncture is superior to sham acupuncture in improving movement related neck pain and range of movement in patients with chronic neck pain (Irnich et al. 2002).

Acupuncture alongside routine care shows better results for chronic neck pain compared to routine care alone (Witt et al. 2006).

Acupuncture is a cost-effective treatment strategy in patients with chronic neck pain according to international cost-effectiveness threshold values (Willich et al. 2006).
REFERENCES


For further information about the effectiveness of acupuncture, and to find your local AACP Physiotherapists, visit:

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